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GOLDWATER-NICHOLS DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1986 SHOULD THE GENERAL
STAFF DEBATE BE OVER?

by

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

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Preface

This paper is about organizational excellence—more importantly, military organizational excellence—and the need for continuing progress. As a sweeping indictment, the Goldwater Nicholas legislation covered a broad waterfront of pertinent issues. In a paper of this limited length, it would be difficult do justice to them all. Therefore, it does not try, but more narrowly focuses on the organizational foundations we emplace preparing for battle—our predominant mode of operation as we prime to fight the next war. As it does, it explores the changing military and international environment since Goldwater-Nicholas was enacted over a decade ago and how it pertains to the original intent related to Service, Joint Staff, and CINC relationships.

I am indebted to many who helped with this project, but I will mention just a few. Lt Col Chuck Holland, my faculty advisor, helped immensely in appropriately narrowing the paper's focus. Dr. Tom Hughes, my Strategy, Doctrine and Air Power professor, helped provide a valuable historical perspective on staff operations. Col Joe McCue, my Seminar Director, helped focus my search for sources. Lt Col Tim Malone from the Joint Staff Doctrine Division was immensely helpful in explaining the Joint Publications process. Finally, my family put up with a lot during the many evenings and weekends I was immersed in research and writing. I owe them all and am eternally grateful for their assistance and understanding.

Abstract

The Goldwater-Nicholas Reorganization Act of 1986 was the most sweeping legislation related to DOD reform since the enabling legislation following World War II. Its de jure purpose, inter alia, was to enhance the legal authority of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the unified commanders. Its practical purpose was to improve U.S. warfighting capability. As one might expect, implementation has been controversial in terms of shifting power from the Services to the Joint Staff and the CINCs, particularly as interpreted by the Joint Staff. It is worth noting the Joint Staff remained an organization which assists the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs vice transitioning to a “general” staff. Many point to the warfighting success of Desert Shield/Desert Storm as conclusive proof that Goldwater-Nicholas achieved its purpose. However, DOD is now entering a period of unsettled reshuffling of budget priorities as Congress and the President struggle with balancing the U.S. budget. This will undoubtedly mean far fewer resources, both dollars and people, for DOD as a whole. Goldwater-Nicholas was enacted under implicit assumptions about strategic threats and organizational needs of the U.S. military (e.g., the Soviet Union was still a viable political entity in 1986). This paper explores whether Goldwater-Nicholas went far enough in its reform efforts, particularly considering the increasing importance of military operations other than war and the inevitable pressures to further reduce the military budget. It focuses on relationships and divisions of labor between the Joint, Service, and CINC staffs.

Chapter 1

Introduction

A good staff has the advantage of being more lasting than the genius of a single man.

—General Antoine Henri Jomini
(1779-1865)

The Goldwater-Nicholas Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 was the most sweeping military reform legislation since the Joint Chiefs of Staff system was codified following World War II. The de jure purpose of this legislation, among other things, was to enhance the legal authority of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the unified commanders in the field. Its practical purpose was to improve the warfighting capability of the United States, particularly in organizational relationships and control of warfighting entities. As one might expect when you significantly alter the status quo, implementation has been controversial. It is worth noting the Joint Staff remained by law an administrative staff which assists the Chairman as opposed to an operational staff with directional authority. Many point to the success of Desert Shield/Desert Storm as conclusive proof that Goldwater Nicholas achieved its purpose. However, others argue a preponderance of force coupled with good, old-fashioned American technological ingenuity carried the day. Both may be right.

Regardless, the Department of Defense is now eclipsed within a reshuffling of national priorities as the President and the Congress struggle with the need to balance the United States budget. Meanwhile, military threats to fundamental American freedoms and prosperity have dwindled to the point of almost disappearing. Ultimately, this will mean fewer resources, both dollars and people, allocated to the U. S. defense establishment. Goldwater Nicholas was enacted at the height of the Cold War. Is its underlying premise still valid? How successful has been its implementation in terms of command authority and product, i.e., American warfighting capability? More importantly, perhaps, are further improvements necessary, particularly in terms of military staff responsibilities and results?

Chapter 2

Intent Of Goldwater Nicholas Legislation

An Act to reorganize the Department of Defense and strengthen civilian authority in the Department of Defense, to improve the military advice provided to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense, to place clear responsibility on the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands for the accomplishment of missions assigned to those commands and ensure that the authority of those commanders is fully commensurate with that responsibility, to increase attention to the formulation of strategy and to contingency planning, to provide for more efficient use of defense resources, to improve joint officer management policies, otherwise to enhance the effectiveness of military operations and improve the management and administration of the Department of Defense, and for other purposes.

—Opening Statement, GOLDWATER-NICHOLS DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1986

Among other objectives, Goldwater-Nicholas was meant to enhance the probability of success when United States military forces execute national security policy and strategy. The need to reinforce the linkage between civilian authority (i.e., the President and the Secretary of Defense) and executing commanders, and executing commanders and their forces played a central role in crafting the legislation. The Act also recognized service cultural loyalties can impede joint warfighting competence. Therefore, the Act meant to strengthen the legitimacy of top-level military advice, give field commanders greater control over troops assigned to them, and support those commanders with quality staffs.

Organizational Relationships and Experience

More specifically—first, it made the Chairman the sole military advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the President, instituted the position of the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs as the second-ranking military officer, and made the Joint Staff answerable to the Chairman rather than the corporate Joint Chiefs.¹ This was in response to significant criticism by, among others, a former Chairman,...”institutional views of the JCS often take too long to prepare; are not in the concise form required by extremely busy senior officials; and, most importantly, do not offer clear, meaningful recommendations on issues affecting more than one service.”²

Second, the Act gave the combatant commanders (i.e., CINCs) greater control in several key areas...”assigning command functions to subordinate commanders, coordinating and approving aspects of administration and support, selecting and suspending subordinates, and convening courts-martial.”³ This was in response to CINCs advocating for greater unity of command. As General Paul F. Gorman, USA (Retired.), former USCINCSOUTH, put it...”each component commander reported to a four-star service commander in the United States for funds, personnel matters, and guidance on priorities. Those service commanders established the length of temporary duty for service members, constrained flying hours per month for aircraft in theater, set training objectives, and controlled allocations for base support and maintenance. Time and again their wishes took precedence over mine. Hence, I became a staunch advocate of reforms.”⁴

Third, the Act recognized the need for quality people to make joint organizations function properly. Therefore, among other things, it requires the Secretary of Defense to

designate a select number of officers from each Service as joint specialty officers which includes joint professional military education and joint duty experience as prerequisites. The Secretary also must designate a select number of joint duty positions that require a joint specialty officer to fill them. Furthermore, promotion expectations for officers having joint duty experience, particularly joint specialty officers, must be equal to or higher than officers filling similar positions in their Service. Plus, joint duty experience is also a prerequisite for promotion to general or flag officer rank.⁵ In short, prior to the Act “DOD has given insufficient attention to the development of military officers capable of effectively performing joint duty assignments...substantial disincentives to serving in (joint) assignments...persist.”⁶

In making these changes, Congress specifically prohibited operation or organization of the Joint Staff as an ..”Armed Forces General Staff...(as such, it) shall have no executive authority.”⁷ This stipulation appears to be an emotional aversion to the Allied experience with Hitler’s Germany in World War II rather than a fact-based decision against efficient, effective staff operations, but nonetheless serves as a real constraint.

World Context

Clearly, in the ensuing ten years since enactment, Goldwater Nicholas has had far reaching impact on how both individuals and organizations serve their country in carrying out military roles and missions. And implementation continues. But, the law came into being under a vastly different set of national security circumstances—namely, during the height of the Cold War. How timeless are its requirements?

Notes

¹ James R. Locher III, “Taking Stock of GOLDWATER-NICHOLS,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 13 (Autumn 1996): 12.

² Senate Armed Services Committee, Staff Report on *Defense Organization: The Need for Change*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., October 16, 1985, Committee Print 99-86, 5.

³ Locher, 13.

⁴ Admiral Joseph W. Prueher, USN, “Warfighting CINCs in a New Era,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 13 (Autumn 1996): 49.

⁵ Public Law 99-433, Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., October 1, 1986, H.R. 3622, Title IV, 1025-1032.

⁶ Staff Report on *Defense Organization: The Need for Change*, 9.

⁷ Public Law 99-433, 1010.

Chapter 3

A New View of the World

America's security imperatives have fundamentally changed. The central security challenge of the past half century—the threat of communist expansion—is gone. The dangers we face today are more diverse.

—President Clinton
National Security Strategy February 1996

WE ARE AT PEACE. Let me repeat that. WE ARE AT PEACE. For the first time in over 55 years, there is no significant military threat to the survival of the United States as a free nation with institutions and interests intact. Of course, our interests often remain at risk and potential for harm still exists. For instance, Russia is the only nation with the capability to literally destroy the U.S. in minutes. Similarly, China has a limited capability to rapidly deliver nuclear warheads against the continental U.S. Regional instabilities also continue. Among others, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, and Libya harbor ill will towards U.S. interests. But the risk of malevolent evil intent coupled with sufficient capacity to successfully execute an attack plan is at the lowest level in decades.

Communism Twice Removed

Today, we face other dangers...one of which has a slippery negative slope as the world's police force where our military resources are used in lieu of others as much or more for their benefit than ours. The first threshold was the Soviet Union falling apart.

The second threshold was the extraordinarily successful coalition cobbled together during Desert Storm, but which was a historical aberration rather than a guaranteed model for future success. Potential U.S. response to dangers abroad is now much more complex than it was in the days of the Cold War. It is characterized as much by our own uncertainty about how to proceed as it is by uncertainty of the specific threat. Economic and diplomatic means of persuasion now take precedence. But, military engagement on a diplomatic or political level sometimes is the most opportune means to influence another party...or at least gain entry for subsequent benefit. Regardless, U.S. military strength is not the priority it once was.

One thing is clear—America expects its military to remain capable of taking on any significant challenges to American freedom and prosperity, even if none currently exists. The U.S. cannot afford to fritter away our current capabilities and also deal a significant blow to our potential for recovery in a timely fashion. Shaping the future to balance degree of risk with degree of preparedness is now our most important task. Headquarters staffs will need to demonstrate excellence in action as part of that process. To do so, however, we must understand both what is and what could be.

Threats in Transition

As stated in the 1996 report by the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress, many of the following threats, or potential threats, are global in scope; hence, require global solutions. Prominent threats are widespread, but certainly less perceptibly overwhelming than during the Cold War:¹

- Attempts by regional powers hostile to U.S. interests to gain hegemony in their regions through aggression or intimidation.
- Internal conflicts among ethnic, national, religious, or tribal groups that threaten innocent lives, force mass migration, and undermine stability and international order.
- Threats by potential adversaries to acquire or use nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons and their means of delivery.
- Threats to democracy and reform in the former Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe, and elsewhere.
- Subversion and lawlessness that undermine friendly governments.
- Terrorism.
- Threats to U.S. prosperity and economic growth.
- Global environmental degradation.
- The illegal drug trade.
- International crime.

Change to Respond or Respond to Change?

This follows over 50 years of a U.S. focus on global warfare, first against the Axis forces during World War II, then a worldwide communist menace during the Cold War starting in the late 1940s. Clearly, the U.S. learned valuable lessons from World War II about unity of command in a particular theater of operations.

From those experiences came the unified command plan—an evolving worldwide organizational scheme that tries to regionalize both planning and execution of U.S. forces, regardless of Service, under a central commander-in-chief of a particular region. Lively debate, sometimes acrimonious, characterizes the evolution of this command plan with the Services continually concerned about infringement of their basic roles and functions. The unified command plan suffers a regular review and continues to evolve as circumstances change.

The end of the Cold War triggered many changes in the U.S. military establishment, but no substantive change in how the U.S. military is structured to deal with the threats

outlined above. Instead, the current plan retained what the Services see as their traditional prerogatives. There are several constraints working against major cuts. First, too much centralization might undercut the newly won prerogatives of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Second, combining or reducing the number of CINCs might result in an expansion of the number of sub-unified commands and exacerbate the perception of too much staff relative to fighting forces. Third, there are diplomatic and political incentives to retain mil to mil direct contact in sensitive regions. Finally, as evident during Goldwater Nicholas deliberations, internal leadership tends to shy away from major disruption in the status quo without significant outside incentive for change.²

Today, there remain five regionally oriented commands (Atlantic Command, Pacific Command, European Command, Southern Command, and Central Command) and four functional ones (Transportation Command, Special Operations Command, Space Command, and Strategic Command). The Commission on Roles and Missions view this as a..."U.S. military called on to perform a broader array of missions in more diverse contingencies situations than they did in the past while still maintaining a capability for large-scale regional conflicts....It is also clear that the emphasis must be on molding DOD into a cohesive set of institutions that work towards a common purpose—effective unified military operations"³

In short, this is a world dominated by change—regional threats rather than a monolithic one, ambiguity over certainty, and new mission realities related to preventing war rather than dominated by it. Peace operations, information warfare, proliferating weapons of mass destruction...all are different from Cold War operations. Is the U.S. military hierarchy, particularly joint staffs, properly structured, trained, and manned to

deal with such issues on a larger, broader scale than ever before? More importantly, is the military properly focused on preserving the mechanisms necessary when national survival may again be at stake? An historical perspective always helps to frame the issues. Perhaps the institutional operational excellence demonstrated again and again by the Germans may offer some insights.

Notes

¹ DTIC. *SECDEF's Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1996*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 17 February 1997, available from http://www.dtic.mil/execsec/adr96/chapt_1.html.

² Ronald H. Cole, Walter S. Poole, James F. Schnabel, Robert J. Watson, and Willard J. Webb, *The History of the Unified Command Plan, 1946-1993* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, February 1995), 116.

³ Department of Defense, *Directions for Defense* (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington DC: Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, 24 May 1995), vii.

Chapter 4

The German General Staff (Corps) A History Lesson

A General Staff is a highly trained, carefully selected group of military generalists whose function in peace or war is to assist the nation's military leadership-or a general commanding a field force of combined arms elements-in planning, controlling, directing, coordinating, and supervising the activities of all military subordinate elements in the most effective manner possible, mutually supporting efforts to achieve an assigned goal or objective, or in maximum readiness to undertake such efforts. The leader or leadership makes decisions and gives commands; the General Staff's responsibility is to provide all possible support to assure that the decisions and commands are timely, sound, and effective.

—Col TN Dupuy, USA (Retired)

As mentioned previously, the Congress has proven very reluctant to give the Joint Staff, or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs for that matter, general executive authority to carry out foundational tasks for U.S. national security. Instead, it has jealously guarded the perceived prerogatives of civilian control of the military—sometimes to the detriment of military efficiencies and effectiveness. Given Congressional concerns about the “man on the white horse,” perhaps this is a laudable approach. However, by operating in this fashion, the U.S. by definition accepts less than the best possible performance by the U.S. military in preserving American freedoms and prosperity. Are there other choices?

There are frequent comparisons with the German Army General Staff experience through World War II. It is not the purpose of this paper to explain how the Germans arrived at their general staff system. Others listed in the bibliography such as Walter

Goerlitz, Col TN Dupuy, and JD Hittle provide a more thorough review. However, there is clear evidence the Germans have done it better than anyone else. What were the results...and what are the dangers? It is worth remembering the Germans lost the two major conflicts of this century—World War I and World War II—which they also initiated to the world's great sorrow. In the process, the German army ..”discovered the secret of institutionalizing military excellence...”In the words of Col Dupuy.¹ What can we learn from their experience?

Definitions

The conduct of military affairs entails a special calling—a calling which requires special gifts of intellect and temperament, what Clausewitz describes as “genius.” But the demands of the modern battlefield, that is, the demands of national security, increasingly require the assistance of others for the commander to successfully employ his “genius.” Often, the term “general staff” means different things to different people.

Staff

In a literal sense, it means the commander’s assistants. A staff serves the commander by performing several basic *functions*: procuring information for the commander, preparing the details of his plans, translating his decisions and plans into specific orders, and then insuring those orders are properly conveyed to the troops which must carry them out.² Over time, staff functions have expanded as the conduct of war has gotten more complex, for instance, in the area of logistical support.

General Staff

As it has become commonly known, a general staff is the primary organizational mechanism which the military arm(s) of a nation uses to assist in making the best decisions and then implementing them at the highest level of command. As such, the German Army General Staff was nothing more than one of the main departments of the Army High Command, albeit the most important one.³ In the strictest sense, all the senior staffs in the U.S. military are general staffs.

General Staff Corps

The Corps in the German Army, Air Force, and Navy was carefully selected from the broader group of German officers and specially trained to fulfill certain functions. It consisted of those officers specially trained to fill those assignments concerned with the overall thrust of military operations. In other words, the German General Staff Corps was specifically intended to make the crucial difference in winning or losing by preparing for and filling staff positions with the greatest impact on military success. The German Chief of the General Staff filled two responsibilities—head of the service General Staff (i.e., the organization) *and* head of the General Staff Corps (i.e., the group of people intended to fill key billets in both the General Staff and the staffs of the field commanders). Not all positions on the General Staff were filled by the General Staff Corps, just the ones which history had demonstrated were the most important.⁴

Characteristics, Policies, and Practices

The ultimate goal of the German General Staff system was to produce commanding entities (either individual generals or organizational elements) with both the “genius” of

Clausewitz and the authority to win on the battlefield. The object was to preserve and enhance human strengths while minimizing the human weaknesses of the average Prussian military officer. There are many examples of systematic success over time. For instance, generals like Hindenburg, Ludendorff, Rundstedt, Kesselring, Rommel...and German combat superiority in World War II against the Western Allies on the order of 20-30 percent, in the East on the order of 100-200 percent depending on the stage of the war.⁵Of course, some of these German successes could be attributed to Allied failings, and the Allies ultimately overwhelmed the Germans because of industrial might and German (mostly civilian) strategic and political stupidity. Alternatively, the Allies also produced superior generals while capitalizing on such intelligence coups as reading the Germans' classified mail...literally, using ENIGMA machines. Plus, the German war machine produced tactical failures and ignorant application of strategic air and sea power. But, all in all, the German institutionalization of military excellence is well documented. Even when defeated in battle, it took overwhelming force for them to succumb. What was their formula?

Institutionalizing Military Excellence

It is theoretically possible the Germans are simply better at executing the military arts through some genetic or cultural trait. But, this is implausible in any scientific or practical sense. Germans are human, too, and make mistakes like the rest of us. In fact, their predictability when accomplishing courses of action is a negative attribute with much anecdotal evidence. However, they are clearly better at minimizing their mistakes and capitalizing on their military successes. Many valid arguments support the superiority of their system of selection, training, and experience which insured superbly

capable humans were in the right place to make the right decisions at the right time—in other words, the German General Staff Corps. The members of the General Staff Corps religiously practiced three invaluable principles of field staff work: 1) each Corps staff officer was jointly responsible with his commander for the conduct of operations (to include advising his commander on the accuracy of decisions without being asked), 2) every Corps staff officer was also responsible to the Chief of the General Staff for orders issued, as well as to his own commander, and 3) procedurally, orders issued took the form of general directives laying out the objective and general circumstances of an operation but studiously avoided any detailed proscription of method.⁶ In other words, give the implementing commander the what and the why—leave the how up to the one responsible for making his own plan of execution work. The attributes of strict accountability and joint responsibility for decisions which directly affect the success of operations continues to hold true within present day German armed forces.⁷

The system the German military machine put in place to consistently outfight other armies of equally average human beings was in great part an unrelenting search for perfection on the battlefield, even if that meant disobeying a orders of a superior. It recognized that “best” solutions often lay in the human application of genius. As such, the path to genius might be littered with permissible human mistakes. The system had ten overlapping areas of focus as follows:⁸

Selection. Cultural influences already attracted the elite of German society into the armed forces officer corps. The further rigorous and deliberate selection of the best within the officer corps undoubtedly brought into the General Staff Corps a high proportion of the best and brightest the nation had to offer.

Examination. Rigorous written tests played a fundamental role in the selection process. This had the added advantage of motivating the entire officers corps to better learn their craft, thereby enhancing the overall knowledge and performance of the army in general.

Specialized Training. Once selected, General Staff officers became the focus of a vigorous and recurring professional educational system with intensive schooling and practical staff training and exercises in the conduct of military operations. There were few parallels. The Soviet system was one which in itself seems to have been modeled after the German system—no surprise given the collaboration between the two countries leading up to World War II.

Historical Study Emphasis. History can be great teacher. More so from the standpoint of what not to do vice what to do. The German system made the most of using history as a theoretical foundation for developing military science and, just as importantly perhaps, gaining a better understanding of human behavior under the pressures of war.

Encouragement of Individual Initiative. The Germans clearly understood the value of gaining the upper hand by acting first. The German emphasis on this attribute was recognized worldwide and perhaps resulted from their recognition of their own negative tendency towards regimentation.

Responsibility. The members of the German General Staff Corps were part of an elite brotherhood which demanded a willingness to help a fellow member, regardless of the enormity or source of the problem, or the physical danger associated with it. This did not mean they were elitist. Their words were backed up by successful action.

Objectivity in Analysis. Rigorous and unfettered, officers in the German General Staff Corps were fanatics in self-examination to fix problems and failings in execution. It was simply expected of a professional, and far above any concern for a personal career. *Any* method which might prevent repetitive mistakes, and therefore minimize chances for defeat was standard operating procedure, not to be questioned.

Goal of Tactical-Technical Perfection. There was *always* room for improvement, particularly when resulting from the hard-learned lessons of practical experience. The General Staff Corps played a fundamental role in the development of doctrine and tactics, and also made sure organization and training placed a great deal of importance on learning lessons.

Regeneration. The General Staff leadership made a deliberate effort to strike an appropriate balance between custom and innovation. For instance, they rigorously maintained high standards of performance, and consciously incorporated new ideas and fresh thinking so potential enemies could not take advantage of human tendencies towards complacency and inaction.

Leavening Process. The process of producing the best General Staff Corps possible inevitably resulted in positive, enhanced performance throughout the German army. First, those that attended staff schools and colleges as part of the selection process gained much even if ultimately not selected for General Staff duty. Second, the reputation of the General Staff Corps encouraged the entire officer corps to assimilate published ideas and concepts resulting from the constant effort to refine the status quo. Finally, Corps officers were detailed throughout the army and promulgated the values they held dear both in lectures, and in practical application to those they supervised.

Implications

Clearly, the German military pursued excellence on the battlefield with ruthless efficiency. It is worth noting the Germans did so with a fairly narrow focus—their Army no surprise given their history as a land power. The broader question is whether that pursuit resulted in an extraordinarily effective tool in the hands of civilian policy makers or was it in fact instrumental in creating the expansionist, aggressive aims of a totalitarian state which the U.S., among others, has shed blood twice this century to control. There clearly is a difference between producing a strong military to enhance national security, something all nations attempt for better or for worse, and its definitive misuse. Democratic, civilian control and national motivations then are crucial issues in how to structure a nation's military to serve the goals of policy. The U. S. has struggled with how our military best serves the American desire for freedom and prosperity. We periodically toy with organizational notions proven by others such as the Germans, but continue to back away from a completely efficient application of the principles. Granted, the German general staff system played a key role in the effective application of military force in World War II, but civilian control was never truly jeopardized—flirted with, but never jeopardized. Hitler was clearly in charge.⁹ If Hitler had listened more closely to his generals, Germany might have won.

The American Debate

Current American attitudes, particularly in Congress, concerning military headquarters staffs center around negative perceptions about German militaristic tendencies and political disputes about preserving Service influence.

In fact, modern general staffs which provide functional assistance to commanders exist in most nations' militaries, to include the United States. As the Secretary of War from 1899 to 1905, Elihu Root fought hard for the establishment of a modern U.S. Army General Staff as enacted into law in 1903. His efforts and frustrations emanated from the muddy lines of authority and the political strength of the various administrative and support bureaus of the pre-Spanish American War U.S. army. It was a constant battle to gain necessary efficiencies because these bureaus had .."become so ossified and bogged down in petty peacetime routine that they could not function adequately in modern industrial war."¹⁰ Subsequent Congresses following World War I continued to try and prevent what they considered political trespass on War Department administrative bureaus. They specifically constricted the size and authority of the U.S. Army General Staff to the original intent of broad planning and operational supervision. During the course of all this, however, there was never any concern about a general staff contributing to militarism or otherwise inappropriate intrusions on civilian authority.¹¹

Following World War II and the generally agreed success of the combined joint chiefs of staff, Congressional concerns shifted towards the "German question" and Service unification. Unsurprisingly, Congress viewed German aggression in World Wars I and II to be a direct result of the German General Staff's shaping of German military institutions, however incomplete the correlation. The negative perception continues to persist to this day. Congress was also concerned about the potential for relatively less influence by the Navy and the Marine Corps within a centralized department of defense in which a separate Service, the U.S. Air Force, was now a functional player.¹² Ultimately, a centralized armed forces military staff combined with the centralized Secretary of

Defense might obtain too much power. Congress jealously guarded their resource allocation authority and, on a less parochial note, the deliberate weighing of alternatives which a democratic form of government provides.¹³

So far, Congress has explicitly ruled out the formation of an armed forces general staff. However, many characteristics of the German model show up in the practical implementation of Goldwater-Nicholas. Revised approaches to doctrine, education and training, and the assignment experiences of Service officers reflect much in practical terms about how the U.S. is realizing some efficiencies along the lines of the German model.

Notes

¹ Col TN Dupuy, USA (Ret.), *A Genius for War; The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945* (Englewood Cliffs N.J. : Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977), 5.

² Brig Gen JD Hittle, USMC (Ret.), *The Military Staff; Its History and Development* (Harrisburg, PA: The Stackpole Company, 1961), 3.

³ GMDS (Combined British, Canadian, and U.S. Staff), *The German General Staff Corps*, staff study, April 1946, ii.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Col TN Dupuy, 253-254, 292-293.

⁶ GMDS, 6.

⁷ Oberst I.G. Christian O.E. Millotat, *Understanding the Prussian-German General Staff System* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1992), 19-22.

⁸ Col TN Dupuy, 303.

⁹ John M. Nolen, "JCS Reforms and the Lessons of German History," *Parameters* 14, no. 3 (Spring 1982): 13-20.

¹⁰ Senate Armed Services Committee, *Staff Report on Defense Organization: The Need for Change*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., October 16, 1985, Senate Print 99-86, 256.

¹¹ Ibid., 254-260.

¹² Ibid., 260-270.

¹³ William G. Hanne, "An Armed Forces Staff," *Parameters* 12, no. 3 (September 1982), 53-56.

Chapter 5

Where Are We Today And Where Do We Need To Go?

Our most important finding is that traditional approaches to roles and missions issues are no longer appropriate. The context has changed significantly in the years since the 1948 Key West Agreement addressed the question of who should do what in the U.S. Military. Today, it is clear that the emphasis must be on molding DOD into a cohesive set of institutions that work toward a common purpose—effective unified military operations—with the efforts of all organizations, processes, and systems focused on that goal from the very beginning.

—Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces
24 May 1995

In a world of ever more limited resources and no clear threat of the significance of the Soviet Union, the U.S. military will not be afforded the luxury of excess—excess in people, excess in equipment, excess in organizations. One commodity we do have in some measure is time—time to experiment, time to evolve, time to improve military architectures and processes. A key question is who decides—on what doctrine to guide the employment of forces—on what weapon systems to fight with—on what training, education, and experiences will best prepare our staffs for success? Of the three areas, the Joint Requirements Oversight Council has advanced the intent of Goldwater Nicholas the furthest from a weapons acquisition standpoint. Ultimately, our people and how we prepare them will serve as the basis for continuing success.

Staff Structures and Joint Doctrine

Year after year, Congress tries to constrain growth in centralized staffs, particularly in the Washington DC area where Congress generally believes they operate to the detriment of where the action should be—in the field. Year after year, their intent fails to translate into reality. Today, there remains 30,000 plus people serving in the Department of Defense headquarters “element.” In 1994, there were 150,000 DOD employees within 25 miles of the Pentagon. This is a reduction of only 15 percent from 1987 while DOD strength overall declined by more than 30 percent as we transitioned from Cold War to peace. Furthermore, large staffs which average about 600 people per appointment are viewed as a prerequisite for each DOD presidential appointee which in and of themselves have grown by 40 percent over the last 20 years.¹ Military staffs are not immune from the disease.

Currently, we effectively have three sets of military headquarters staffs with commensurate cultures—the Services, the CINCs, and the Joint Staff. Each believes they play a central role in fundamental decisions about the future of the U.S. military. Clearly, the CINCs will continue to be the focus for planning and executing specific military operations in their areas of mission responsibility. However, too much diffusion of authority and responsibility in the broader functional areas of doctrine, military education, and assignment experiences in the short run leads to debilitating confusion and inefficiencies. Longer term, it perpetuates ignorance and inaction in the effective joint integration of forces. Several emerging mission areas require decisive actions which cross both Service and CINC areas of authority and responsibility: 1) proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, 2) information warfare, 3) peace operations, and 4)

operations other than war.² Some overlap is good. Too much specialization without an appropriate degree of cross fertilization of ideas and rigorous review usually leads to less than perfect solutions because of limited thinking. Similarly, linkage between the various core competencies of the Services will be critical as we apply complex solutions to complex problems. On the other hand, too much overlap in a resource constrained environment means staff efforts are spread thin. More importantly, institutional cultures tend to squander time and energy over process rather than results. How much overlap do we really have?

Services

Each of the Services are in the process of or have recently reorganized to one degree or another. The following highlights what each headquarters focuses on in joint matters and the numbers of people they use to accomplish the tasks of organizing, training, and equipping...among other things.

U.S. Army Staff. As the senior ranking officer within his service, the Chief of Staff of the Army presides over the Army Staff which assists the Secretary of the Army in long range planning, resource determination and allocation, the formulation of broad policy guidance, and otherwise providing for the long-term health and competence of the Army. For joint matters, the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans serves as the primary representative to the Joint Staff, conducts assessments about the ability of Army forces to execute the national and military strategy, develops requirements and implementation strategies for joint warfighting needs, and develops Army policy for participation in the joint arena.³ In total, the Chief of Staff of the Army has 949 uniformed military and 722 civilian personnel to help him in his responsibilities.⁴

Staff of the Chief of Naval Operations. As the senior ranking officer within his service, the Chief of Naval Operations presides over the Navy staff. For joint matters, the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Plans, Policy and Operations serves as his primary representative to the Joint Staff. Among other things, he...”advises on command of the operating forces consistent with the operational command vested in unified and specified combatant commanders...provides support for the Joint Doctrine Development process...develops and disseminates policies and plans on international politico-military matters...advises in the administration of insular government matters affecting the strategic posture of the Navy...advises on the assignment of naval flag officers to JCS, unified combatant commands, other joint commands and other services...develops Navy strategic plans and policies, assists in formulating joint doctrine and combined strategic plans and policies, and advises on related command relationships and service roles and missions...reviews general and contingency war plans...advises on National Security Council policy issues and other national policies...manages and operates the Naval Reconnaissance Center in support of the Joint Reconnaissance Center...”⁵ In total, CNO’s staff consists of 808 uniformed military and 382 civilian personnel.

U.S. Air Staff: As the senior ranking officer within his service, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force presides over the Air Staff. Recently reorganized, the Air Staff handles joint matters primarily through the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. Among other things, the Air Staff intends to maintain a “strong, focused approach to joint issues” and provide a “single focal point for all the necessary support for nuclear issues and proliferation” as well as “promote airpower doctrinal awareness across all AF ranks and in the joint arena” through creation of a direct reporting unit to the Chief of Staff, the Air

Force Doctrine Center.⁶ In total, the Air Staff has 911 officers, 178 enlisted, and 494 civilian personnel.

U.S. Marine Corps Headquarters Staff. As the senior ranking officer within his service, the Marine Corps Commandant presides over the Headquarters, Marine Corps Staff. Among other things, the Staff assists in the mission of...“developing, in coordination with the Army, Navy, and the Air Force, the doctrines, tactics, techniques, and equipment employed by landing forces in amphibious operations...providing Marine forces for airborne operations, in coordination with the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force and in accordance with doctrines established by the Joint Chiefs of Staff...”⁷ Headquarters Marine Corps Staff numbers compare favorably with the other Services.

Joint Staff

By law, the Joint Staff supports the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Specific “areas of responsibility include:⁸

- Presenting military advice to the President, the National Security Council (NSC), and the Secretary of Defense.
- Interacting with the NSC and Interagency.
- Providing guidance and instructions to the unified and specified commands.
- Establishing policies and procedures to support fulfillment of the other statutory and directed responsibilities of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- As directed by the Chairman, fulfilling the statutory responsibilities of the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- Performing the day-to-day operations of the Joint Staff.”

The Joint Staff has 769 officers, 285 enlisted, and 193 civilians assigned.⁹ It is worth noting the Service and Joint Staffs are collocated in the Pentagon while the CINC’s maintain their headquarters elsewhere, sometimes in their AOR, sometimes not.

Commanders-In-Chief

Each of the CINCs have a supporting staff organized under the standard joint format (i.e., J1 personnel, J2 intelligence, J3 operations, J4 logistics, J5 plans, etc.). With one exception, United States Atlantic Command, each performs a mission which is either geographically or functionally defined. The regional CINCs are responsible for the following general geographic areas:¹⁰

- U.S. European Command—All of Europe, most of Africa, and some Middle East (e.g., Israel).
- U.S. Pacific Command—Greater Pacific Ocean area, the Pacific Rim countries (e.g., China, Japan, the Koreans, Philippines, Vietnam, etc.), and the Indian Ocean (e.g., India).
- U.S. Central Command—Middle East, Southwest Asia, Northeast Africa, and the Arabian Gulf.
- U.S. Southern Command—Central and South America.
- U.S. Atlantic Command—Waters of the North and South Atlantic and those land masses surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean.

The functional CINCs are responsible for the following general mission areas:

- U.S. Transportation Command Worldwide transportation of military forces on land, sea, and air in peace and in war.
- U.S. Special Operations Command—Worldwide deployment of special operations forces to conduct limited warfare and special operations; psychological operations; and civil affairs missions.¹¹
- U.S. Space Command Deployment and employment of space-based assets.
- U.S. Strategic Command Nuclear based deterrence and employment of nuclear forces.
- U.S. Atlantic Command Training CONUS-based land, maritime, and air forces for joint employment by combatant commanders.¹²

Each CINC has a dedicated headquarters staff to assist him in his responsibilities.

The following highlights the numbers of people each has assigned to plan and execute the mission, among other things.

Table 1. Number of Personnel per CINC Staff

CINC	Officers	Civilians	Enlisted	Total
USEUCOM	753	445	840	2038
USPACOM	1191	793	1414	3398
USCENTCOM	638	166	626	1430
USSOUTHCOM	365	246	270	881
USACOM	708	429	831	1968
USTRANSCOM	249	259	157	665
USSTRATCOM	863	348	1048	2259
USSOCOM	466	484	448	1398
USSPACECOM	576	166	418	1160
TOTAL	5809	3336	6052	15197

Source: CDR David Birt, *Joint Manpower Changes Chart, FY90-97*, telecon with author on 18 March 1997.

Procedurally, the Joint Staff remains solicitous of organizations affected by the Chairman's decisions by always coordinating with appropriate agencies prior to decisions being made. The extent of such coordination depends on the specific action contemplated, but as standard policy..."coordination with the Services, unified and specified commands, and Defense agencies will be sought on actions that impact on the Service's plans or policies, combatant commands' strategies and readiness, or *which they have requested the opportunity to coordinate (italics mine)*."¹³ Furthermore, there is a sometimes cumbersome process by which Joint Staff planners attempt to resolve differences with coordinating agencies to minimize the number of issues raised to the Joint Chiefs level. In other words, there remain procedural mechanisms which recognize human incentives to compromise early.

Clearly, USACOM has a greater influence than the other CINCs under Goldwater Nicholas. Implementation of this substantive change to the Unified Command Plan was not without controversy. Goldwater-Nicholas was intended for only CINCs to control

forces—even CONUS-based ones not deployed. However, the allocation day to day of most U.S. forces to USACOM could undercut the role of other CINCs or even the Chairman himself. Hence, the Unified Command Plan requires coordination with the other CINCs and review by the Chairman of joint force packages.¹⁴ Nonetheless, this gives USCINACOM extra authority and power no other CINC has.

A related matter is the development of joint doctrine which applies across Services. The Joint Staff Joint Doctrine Division in J-7 is the focal point for “managing the development of joint doctrine and joint tactics, techniques, and procedures...” and “assisting in ensuring the universal practice of joint doctrine.”¹⁵ Located in Norfolk, VA, the Joint Warfighting Center’s mission is to...”assist CJCS, CINCs, and Chiefs of Services in their preparation for joint and multinational operations in the conceptualization, development, and assessment of current and future joint doctrine...”¹⁶ The CJCS is held responsible by Goldwater Nicholas for...” Developing doctrine for the joint employment of the armed forces.”¹⁷ But, the staff lines of authority to assist him in that process immediately become blurred. Unfortunately, the Services, under the guise of being assigned “lead agent,” more often than not control the agenda, and therefore strongly influence the outcome—as does USCINACOM with his joint training and integration responsibilities. Clearly, the Services have much to offer when it comes to doctrine related to their core competencies. But, at some point, the decision to implement the best doctrinal solution requires leadership from a joint agency that does not have a particular ax to grind either from a Service or a CINC bias. Contrary to popular belief and outcry from the Services, the Joint Staff continues to struggle with the day-to-day cooperation mindset of the past and the tendency of Service officers assigned

there to prefer deferring to their Service when possible. J-7 has a master development plan for joint doctrine. As such, the addition of a Joint Doctrine Division to the Joint Staff and CINC coordination is a significant improvement over the complete lack of such mechanisms before Goldwater-Nicholas, to include a requirement for Service doctrine and practices to comply with joint doctrine. But, so far the plan demonstrates continuing consideration of intraservice concerns based on pre-Goldwater Nicholas practices as opposed to comprehensive development of a master doctrinal plan with a relentless joint focus. The cozy location and organizational relationship between USACOM staff functions, Service doctrinal development (particularly the Army), and the joint agency responsible for developing joint doctrine appears unhealthy for the best long-term development of joint doctrine. Currently, 33 of the 109 joint doctrine publications continue to officially reflect old JCS processes and thinking, and limited substance such as Shipboard Helo Ops forces one to wonder about the vision for long-term improvement.¹⁸

A good example of the continuing intraservice focus is the consensus reached by Gen Fogleman and Gen Reimer recently on Counterair, Fire Support doctrine. Apparent disagreement over terminology and lines of demarcation held up joint doctrinal publication in this area for quite some time for the convenience of the Services.¹⁹

The situation has improved, but could be better. The Chairman was given explicit authority under Goldwater Nicholas to resolve such issues in favor of the best solution. But, many times details require resolution below his level. Generally, CINCs and Services initiate innovation in joint doctrine rather than the Joint Staff.²⁰ Ultimately, the Chairman decides, but the process to get to him is deliberate and potentially ill-focused.

In other words, the Chairman has the authority to override the CINCs in the key area of doctrine...but, his staff does not have the option of overriding CINC or Service staffs under the law. The good news is the development process is clearly improving, albeit slowly.

In the final analysis, the interested CINC will resolve any differences when preparing for the battle. But waiting until then perpetuates imprecision in training and exercises with much greater potential for serious mistakes when executing plans for real. The CINC responsible for joint integration, USCINACOM, admitted, ..”the lack of common joint doctrine has so far prevented the Armed Forces from reaching the synergistic joint level.”²¹ Ultimately, effective force integration requires a greater understanding of the doctrine-based attributes of each Service under a common, comprehensive joint doctrine followed by practice, practice, practice.

Joint Education and Training

Success in joint professional military education requires both intellectual development and schooling in the operational arts. Joint training complements those skills by applying them in a practical way for effective force employment under realistic combat scenarios. They both involve a fundamental understanding of Service core competencies, particularly your own, and how they should interact to form a coherent, synergistic whole. The challenge is to appropriately balance Service capabilities and cultures with joint requirements.

The objectives of the joint professional military education system are basically twofold: 1) officers able to work effectively with sister Services and other government

agencies in formulating strategy and then implementing it in an appropriately integrated air, sea, and/or land campaign, and 2) officers who can think strategically in developing comprehensive solutions to complex national security problems. To accomplish these objectives, the program is broken down into two phases. Phase I is a broadening curriculum embedded in each Service's intermediate and senior service school. Part II focuses on joint staff operation and is under the control of the CJCS through the Joint Staff and the National Defense University architecture. In my experience at the war colleges of the Navy and the Air Force, Phase I is a fact-based review of individual service capabilities with some assimilation of service interaction through the use of table-top exercises. Phase II, as highlighted in the Armed Forces Staff College basic reference, is intended to "help members of a joint staff work more effectively as action officers, understand the joint planning process, and interpret and prepare products of the planning process."²² As practiced, this is a process-oriented approach rather than an results-based one. It is not necessary, nor should it be, to have completed joint professional military education to participate in joint training and force integration.

As mentioned previously, USACOM has been given the responsibility as joint force integrator, trainer, and provider of the majority of U.S. combat forces under the Unified Command Plan. As such, USACOM's component forces are the U.S. Army's Forces Command, the U.S. Air Force's Air Combat Command, the U.S. Navy's Atlantic Fleet, and the U.S. Marine Corps' Marine Forces Atlantic. It is worth noting this does not include other CINC assigned forces, such as USCINCPAC or USCINCEUR. A key metric for USACOM success will be the training and exercise architecture it puts in place to assist the other geographic CINCs. The comprehensive identification of training

objectives on the joint mission essential task list is a critical first step in the realization of truly joint training and coherent joint operations across all CINC areas of responsibility. At the moment, the Joint Staff and the CINCs are still in the process of putting an effective joint training system in place, but the general architecture as identified in the recently published Joint Training Manual, CJCSM 3500.03, dated 1 June 1996 appears to be a solid start. Without a doubt, the joint force commander should serve as the core of the joint training process both in substance and intent. Proof of success will come when all the CINCs implement and assess results of the total system, which has yet to happen. Admiral Preuher, USCINCPAC, apparently has faith in the promise. In his view, joint task force training is..."clearly work in progress...acting closely with USACOM, the future joint task force training picture will result in a more efficient and effective program to capitalize on USACOM investments and capabilities for PACOM theater-specific JTF training and augmentation experience."²³ A complementary measure of merit will be how effectively the CINCs, the Services, and the Joint Staff will man joint billets and reward joint officers still wearing the uniform of individual Services.

Joint Experience and Promotions

A clear, underlying design behind Goldwater Nicholas was to promote quality of service in joint billets—a uniformed officer culture clearly focused on doing their best for country as opposed to furthering a single Service. This objective was based on the shortfalls of the former joint officer assignment system repeatedly identified during Congressional testimony, but most closely linked with General David C. Jones, USAF (Retired).²⁴ High standards for selection and promotion were linked to both individuals

and assignment billets to provide incentives for the Services' best and brightest to place a higher priority on serving joint interests first. How well is the process working?

Joint specialty officers, commonly referred to as JSOs, are an elite group of field grade officers specifically identified by the Secretary of Defense with the advice of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Their purpose is to serve joint interests by filling one-half of the joint duty assignment positions and all of the 971 joint positions designated as critical. The following charts highlight the number and types of specialties along with Service propensity to comply with the intent of the law (all figures are for FY96). Clearly, the Army focused on the potential shift in influence early.

Table 2. Critical Occupational Specialties

USA (366)	USAF (351)	USMC (59)	USN (195)
Infantry	Pilot	Infantry	Surface
Armor	Navigator	Tanks/AAV	Submariner
Artillery	C ² Operations	Artillery	Aviation
Air Defense Artillery	Space/Missile Ops	Air Control/Air Support/ Antiair Support/Antiair	SEALS
Aviation		Aviation	Special Ops
Special Operations		Engineers	
Combat Engineers			

Source: Lt Col Susan Brown, USAF, DASD, Force Management and Personnel, "Goldwater-Nicholas Act Implementation Report (Draft-Approved by SECDEF)," *SECDEF's Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1997*, telephone/e-mail interview with author, 28 January 1997.

Table 3. Joint Duty Positions by Service Designation

Category	USA	USAF	USMC	USN	Total
Joint Staff	269	270	65	213	817
Other Joint Duty	2980	3247	494	1802	8523
Total Joint Duty	3249	3517	559	2015	9340
% of Total DOD JDAs	34.8	37.7	6.0	21.6	100.0
% of Total DOD Officers	28.7	38.1	8.4	24.8	100.0

Source: Lt Col Susan Brown, USAF, DASD, Force Management and Personnel, “Goldwater-Nicholas Act Implementation Report (Draft-Approved by SECDEF),” *SECDEF’s Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1997*, telephone/e-mail interview with author, 28 January 1997.

Table 4. Summary of JSOs on Active Duty with Critical Occupational Specialty

USA	USAF	USMC	USN	Total
1109(FY96-346)	1037(FY96-125)	430(FY96-0)	899(FY96-44)	3475(FY96-515)

Source: Lt Col Susan Brown, USAF, DASD, Force Management and Personnel, “Goldwater-Nicholas Act Implementation Report (Draft-Approved by SECDEF),” *SECDEF’s Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1997*, telephone/e-mail interview with author, 28 January 1997.

Table 5. Analysis of Follow-on First Assignment after JSO Designation

Category	USA	USAF	USMC	USN	Total
Command	116	39	10	13	178
Service HQ	13	6	6	6	31
Joint Staff critical	2	2	0	4	8
Joint Staff other	6	6	0	0	12
Other JDA critical	15	6	1	9	31
Other JDA	84	10	2	3	99
PME	15	22	2	2	41
Other Ops(Fleet USMC)	32	5	5	10	52
Other Staff(Non-Fleet USMC)	60	12	4	13	89
Other Shore	-	-	-	6	6

Source: Lt Col Susan Brown, USAF, DASD, Force Management and Personnel, “Goldwater-Nicholas Act Implementation Report (Draft-Approved by SECDEF),” *SECDEF’s Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1997*, telephone/e-mail interview with author, 28 January 1997.

Table 6. Summary of JSOs with Critical Occupational Specialties Serving or Having Served in a Second Joint Assignment

Category	USA	USAF	USMC	USN	Total
Field Grade*					
Have served	163(46)	173(66)	21(9)	41(16)	398(137)
Are serving	155(74)	141(68)	17(9)	51(29)	364(180)
General/Flag*					
Have served	14(7)	18(7)	5(3)	11(6)	48(23)
Are serving	12(9)	29(10)	4(3)	7(3)	52(25)

Source: Lt Col Susan Brown, USAF, DASD, Force Management and Personnel, “Goldwater-Nicholas Act Implementation Report (Draft-Approved by SECDEF),” *SECDEF’s Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1997*, telephone/e-mail interview with author, 28 January 1997.

**Number in parentheses is number of second joint assignments to critical position.*

Of particular interest is the Service tendency to move JSOs into command billets (which are not joint) soon after attaining JSO status. So far, a “corps” joint culture is still a work in progress.

Several additional provisos apply. The Congress placed sufficient importance on joint duty assignments to require joint duty experience before an officer could be selected for promotion to general or flag officer rank. Furthermore, although the Services retained responsibility for officer promotions, promotion rates for those serving as JSOs or having served in joint duty assignments on the Joint Staff must be at or above Service headquarters rates. Promotion rates for those having served in other joint duty assignments must be at or above the promotion board average.²⁵ A decade after enactment of the law, measurement of quality as a function of promotion rates provides a mixed picture.

Table 7. O 4 Promotion Rates (Line) (No. Selected/No. Considered %)

FY 93				
Category	USA	USAF	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	-	-	-	-
JSO	-	-	-	-
Service Headquarters				
Other JDA	9/14 - 64	47/60 - 78	21/24 - 88	0/1 - 0
Board Average	1427/2007 - 71	2191/2915 - 75	762/1111 - 69	283/423 - 67
FY 94				
Category	USA	USAF	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	-	-	2/2 - 100	1/1 - 100
JSO	-	-	-	-
Service Headquarters			22/26 - 85	45/56 - 80
Other JDA	10/11 - 91	58/68 - 85	16/23 - 70	16/23 - 70
Board Average	1655/2129 - 78	2003/2741 - 73	1182/1713 - 69	533/789 - 68
FY 95				
Category	USA	USAF	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	-	2/3 - 67	1/1 - 100	-
JSO	-	-	-	-
Service Headquarters		33/35 - 94	9/11 - 82	
Other JDA	11/13 - 85	40/51 - 78	12/20 - 60	2/2 - 100
Board Average	1512/2064 - 73	2098/2891 - 73	773/1168 - 66	687/999 - 69
FY 96				
Category	USA	USAF	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	-	1/1 - 100	1/1 - 100	-
JSO	-	-	-	-
Service Headquarters		42/45 - 93	4/4 - 100	
Other JDA	8/8 - 100	36/42 - 86	2/7 - 29	6/10 - 60
Board Average	1442/1967 - 73	2088/2859 - 73	618/1017 - 61	619/809 - 77

Source: Lt Col Susan Brown, USAF, DASD, Force Management and Personnel, "Goldwater-Nicholas Act Implementation Report (Draft-Approved by SECDEF)," *SECDEF's Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1997*, telephone/e-mail interview with author, 28 January 1997.

Table 8. O-5 Promotion Rates (Line) (No. Selected/No. Considered %)

FY 93				
Category	USA	USAF	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	11/11 - 100	24/27 - 89	10/12 - 83	3/5 - 60
JSO	51/55 - 93	72/101 - 71	18/24 - 75	12/20 - 60
Service Headquarters	112/127 - 88	119/135 - 88	33/41 - 80	33/45 - 73
Other JDA	262/367 - 71	193/274 - 70	51/71 - 72	29/50 - 58
Board Average	1216/1927 - 63	1196/1887 - 63	346/548 - 63	180/332 - 54
FY 94				
Category	USA	USAF	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	19/20 - 95	24/26 - 92	31/35 - 89	2/2 - 100
JSO	9/10 - 90	38/47 - 81	15/22 - 68	6/7 - 86
Service Headquarters	73/97 - 75	147/165 - 90	71/84 - 85	19/29 - 66
Other JDA	216/320 - 68	240/347 - 70	94/131 - 72	13/23 - 57
Board Average	1080/1656 - 65	1413 /2246 - 63	696/1069 - 65	142/250 - 57
FY 95				
Category	USA	USAF	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	12/13 - 92	27/32 - 84	7/9 - 78	4/5 - 80
JSO	10/11 - 91	1/1 - 100	2/3 - 67	1/2 - 50
Service Headquarters	79/106 - 75	226/266 - 85	29/38 - 76	47/78 - 60
Other JDA	194/291 - 67	301/455 - 66	66/81 - 82	53/85 - 82
Board Average	1000/1641 - 61	1843/2930 - 63	331/522 - 63	290/507 - 57
FY 96				
Category	USA	USAF	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	12/15 - 80	30/31 - 97	14/15 - 93	8/8 - 100
JSO	14/14 - 100	2/2 - 100	13/15 - 87	-
Service Headquarters	91/123 - 74	216/251 - 86	41/58 - 71	56/73 - 77
Other JDA	247/364 - 68	329/476 - 70	63/94 - 67	66/90 - 73
Board Average	1103/1838 - 60	1386/2200 - 63	373/600 - 62	328/501 - 66

Source: Lt Col Susan Brown, USAF, DASD, Force Management and Personnel, "Goldwater-Nicholas Act Implementation Report (Draft-Approved by SECDEF)," *SECDEF's Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1997*, telephone/e-mail interview with author, 28 January 1997.

Table 9. O-6 Promotion Rates (Line) (No. Selected/No. Considered %)**FY 93**

Category	USA	USAF	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	11/32 - 34	15/30 - 50	23/43 - 53	4/8 - 50
JSO	154/335 - 46	101/161 - 63	54/94 - 57	24/55 - 44
Service Headquarters	80/169 - 47	93/137 - 68	37/78 - 47	26/50 - 52
Other JDA	32/123 - 26	78/140 - 56	21/61 - 34	18/33 - 55
Board Average	428/964 - 44	459/1102 - 42	226/459 - 49	91/218 - 42

FY 94

Category	USA	USAF	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	27/47 57	30/52 58	17/36 47	2/12 17
JSO	84/232 36	113/190 60	50/107 47	22/50 44
Service Headquarters	89/168 53	92/152 61	47/99 47	13/34 38
Other JDA	70/161 44	62/145 43	29/66 44	11/31 36
Board Average	359/817 44	548/1308 42	204/455 45	68/166 41

FY 95

Category	USA	USAF*	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	27/53 51		14/22 64	7/9 78
JSO	98/239 41		26/51 51	14/34 41
Service Headquarters	65/144 45		33/64 52	11/29 38
Other JDA	65/161 40		27/62 44	12/28 43
Board Average	341/796 43		160/338 47	70/163 43

* No board held.

FY 96

Category	USA	USAF	USN	USMC
Joint Staff	43/56 77	44/57 77	39/58 67	12/21 57
JSO	96/201 48	127/195 65	32/68 47	32/63 51
Service Headquarters	52/131 40	98/156 63	49/83 59	22/41 54
Other JDA	65/144 45	94/216 44	39/92 42	13/27 48
Board Average	319/717 45	502/1198 42	243/500 49	93/207 45

Source: Lt Col Susan Brown, USAF, DASD, Force Management and Personnel, "Goldwater-Nicholas Act Implementation Report (Draft-Approved by SECDEF)," *SECDEF's Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1997*, telephone/e-mail interview with author, 28 January 1997.

Table 10. O 7 Promotion Rates (Line) (No. Selected/No. Considered %)**FY 93**

<i>Category</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>USAF</i>	<i>USN</i>	<i>USMC</i>
Joint Staff	2/75 3	2/22 9	3/30 10	2/15 13
JSO	23/1115 2	27/833 3	9/485 2	12/218 6
Service Headquarters	7/215 3	9/136 7	5/191 3	5/95 5
Other JDA	3/147 2	1/122 1	3/82 4	1/25 4
Board Average	38/1734 2	39/1757 2	26/1106 2	15/410 4

FY 94

<i>Category</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>USAF</i>	<i>USN</i>	<i>USMC</i>
Joint Staff	4/74 5	3/47 6	2/26 8	3/12 25
JSO	24/864 3	30/765 4	13/442 3	11/207 5
Service Headquarters	7/145 5	11/169 7	5/161 3	4/85 5
Other JDA	1/183 1	6/209 3	0/83 0	1/20 5
Board Average	39/1653 2	45/1907 2	25/1106 2	15/393 4

FY 95

<i>Category</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>USAF</i>	<i>USN</i>	<i>USMC</i>
Joint Staff	2/42 5	1/57 2	3/32 9	0/14 0
JSO	21/920 2	30/703 4	9/399 2	9/233 4
Service Headquarters	9/168 5	9/214 4	4/139 3	6/89 7
Other JDA	2/154 1	5/245 2	5/88 6	1/19 5
Board Average	42/1739 2	39/1847 2	25/1019 3	15/510 3

FY 96

<i>Category</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>USAF</i>	<i>USN</i>	<i>USMC</i>
Joint Staff	4/66 6	4/36 11	6/46 13	4/18 22
JSO	10/848 1	30/642 5	9/368 2	6/238 3
Service Headquarters	13/275 5	11/157 7	10/275 4	3/120 3
Other JDA	7/275 3	5/234 2	4/96 4	1/29 3
Board Average	45/1810 2	51/1818 3	27/952 3	8/517 2

Source: Lt Col Susan Brown, USAF, DASD, Force Management and Personnel, “Goldwater-Nicholas Act Implementation Report (Draft-Approved by SECDEF),” *SECDEF’s Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1997*, telephone/e-mail interview with author, 28 January 1997.

Observations And Recommendations

In many ways, the current Goldwater-Nicholas architecture already has many attributes of a general staff corps system in place. By definition, JSOs are an elite group

with a separate selection process for quality performance in joint operations. Unfortunately, practical control of the selection process remains with the organizations which are perceived to benefit the least from the process—the Services. Therefore, the practical result may be the wrong people in the wrong positions to really make a difference. This is difficult to measure and certainly not constant, but thinking otherwise places an unrealistic burden on the altruism of Service motivations.

Another valid concern voiced in much of the literature is a practical tendency for a single Service perspective to dominate, usually the army, in any joint activity made up of multiservice personnel. The only solution to this would be a truly “purple suit” officer corps which cuts all ties with their Service. Given the failure of the Canadian experiment with this concept, I do not believe we should reverse documented success with the experiences provided by single Services for at least part of JSO duty. There are real dangers in completely isolating officers from their Service. Innovation and operational reality would suffer too much. So what other alternatives make sense?

Using the German General Staff Corps experience as a lens to focus on U.S. joint efforts, the following observations appear reasonable given the decade which the Services, the Joint Staff, and the CINCs have had to fulfill the intent of Goldwater Nicholas. These observations also consider the significant changes in the international security environment which have taken place since the law was enacted. The German model was not perfect, but it serves as a useful mechanism for evaluating the current American experience, particularly considering the lengthy and sometimes acrimonious aversion by the uniformed military to Goldwater Nicholas in general and an elite general staff-like system in particular.

Selection: Generally speaking, volunteering for the U.S. officer corps is already seen as a positive thing in American society. In fact, recent polling, at least since Goldwater-Nicholas was enacted, reflects the highest admiration by the American public of the military among other professionals, particularly of those in government service. (Members of Congress are at the bottom!) With the institution of the joint specialty officer, it appears the U.S. military has initiated a selection process for setting up an elite pool of officers similar to the German system—but not nearly as rigorous. Selection standards are unclear, certainly not well documented, and the nomination process remains with each Service and is an overriding consideration rather than with a central agency under the control of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, or the deciding authority, the Secretary of Defense. The law leaves it up to the Secretary to decide how and whom he selects once the Services nominate. This is fixable internally.

Examination: There is uncertain rigor in a selection process which relies on written records of past, mostly Service-unique performance, the vagaries of a joint duty experience, and graduating from Service schools which do not have consistent evaluation mechanisms. The addition of an appropriately standardized, high-level testing process would at least level the playing field by identifying what is important for successful joint duty performance before the joint system invests too heavily in a relatively unproved commodity.

Specialized Training. Once selected, joint specialty officers receive no further specialized training in the operational arts other than that coincidental with a particular joint duty position. USACOM appears to be headed towards filling this gap, but with happenstance applicability for current members of a joint force commander's staff and no

game plan for joint specialty officers to receive such training for the long term benefit of this select officer pool. Furthermore, USCINCOM does not have the authority to force other CINC staffs, or forces for that matter, to benefit from what USACOM is developing. Perhaps the Chairman through the Joint Staff should more directly oversee the excellent conceptual start USACOM has made in this area, and then administer the resulting curriculum through the Armed Forces Staff College.

Historical Study Emphasis. History can be great teacher. But the Service and joint school systems are inconsistent in its application as a learning tool. There should be a core joint curriculum broader based than today which draws upon tools such as the Chairman's reading list. A focused, expandable approach would permit each Service to elaborate in follow-on areas of functional expertise while providing an overarching foundation for consistent appreciation of the operational arts from both an historical and a human perspective. We are just now entering the first accreditation review cycle by the Chairman of the Service schools. This review will undoubtedly surface recommendations for improvement.

Encouragement of Individual Initiative. This is already a core premise of U.S. military operations regardless of Service. The joint environment at all levels must continue to foster and encourage the trait.

Responsibility. Similarly, individual responsibility is viewed by each Service as a bond which sustains teamwork. The brotherhood of arms (figuratively speaking) is a special calling. Joint duty deserves no less. There is little reason to think that it is otherwise. Frequent joint training assists in further developing this bond between Services participating in joint actions.

Objectivity in Analysis. The pursuit of perfection is a noble course which should not be tainted with anything less than truth. Competition, even if friendly, between Services can sometimes stand in the way. Joint performance personnel reporting standards and appropriate appreciation for human incentives are necessary for superior service to country before Service. Service and joint PME systems provide the educational underpinnings for superior problem solving skills. Then promotion systems preserve equal application of performance standards and foster a relentless search for warfighting improvements by both individual JSOs as well as the group as a whole. There currently exists no joint personnel channel for promotion grievances after the fact. Perhaps there should be one.

Goal of Tactical-Technical Perfection. Joint doctrine must serve as a clear guiding light for both joint operations and the development of Service doctrine. Currently, the joint doctrine development architecture appears disjointed and lacking appropriate vision. In the words of the Commission on Roles and Missions, “a joint agency should (always) be designated to lead the process, thus eliminating use of one Service as lead agent for capstone joint doctrine.”²⁶ Proper joint training and integration will follow. Otherwise, Service bias and bickering will creep in regardless of purity of intent.

Regeneration. The system currently expects joint specialty officers to continue to serve the joint system once so designated. The heretofore somewhat haphazard approach for selecting JSOs tends to force joint service at the potential expense of command expertise in the Services. Systematic consideration should be given by the Chairman to the importance of command billets at all levels in all Services when assigning joint

specialty officers. Both joint operations and Service commands will suffer if one takes precedence over the other. Currently, there is the potential for doing so.

Personnel promotion systems for JSOs are similarly ill-focused. Allowing Services alone to set standards for selecting and promoting JSOs abdicates a responsibility under the law.

Leavening Process. We are in the embryonic stages of implementing the intent of Goldwater-Nicholas when it comes to developing a completely professional, joint-oriented officer corps. There is room for both joint and Service experience in meeting the overall national security needs of the country. In fact, there is tremendous benefit in cross flow back and forth between joint and Service assignments to promote the sharing of experiences and ideas. However, the process should be under central, joint control. Clearly, the intent of Goldwater Nicholas was to give the Chairman more authority in that process. Given the Services' record and results since 1986, intrinsic incentives should be the key for top notch joint performance rather than legislated quotas or formulas as it is now. Ultimately, this would require a comprehensive game plan for selection, training, and experience of individual officers under central management by the Chairman. JSOs answering more directly to the Chairman for selection and promotions would inevitably lead to increased loyalty on the part of Service officers and would undoubtedly fix many concerns about Joint Staff deference to Services and CINCs. Executive authority for the Joint Staff is probably unnecessary if the right human motivations are in place.

Notes

¹ William Brehm, Chairman, Systems Research and Applications Corporation, "On Revolution, Barriers, and Common Sense," speech to National Defense University

Notes

Symposium, "The Goldwater-Nicholas DOD Reorganization Act: A Ten Year Retrospective," Washington, DC, December 3, 1996.

² Department of Defense, *Directions for Defense* (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington DC: Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, 24 May 1995), ES-4.

³ AR 10-5, *Organization and Functions of Headquarters, Department of the Army*, 30 November 1992, 18.

⁴ Ms. Joan Wilson, Office of SECARMY, Administrative Assistant, Operating Agency 22, telecon with author, 17 March 1997.

⁵ OPNAVINST 5430.48D, *Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Organization Manual*, as revised 1 June 1994, N3/N5-2 - N3/N5-6.

⁶ Point Paper, Maj Kile, AF/PEO, "Air Staff Reorganization," 12 December 1996.

⁷ United States Marine Corps Mission and Functions Statement, *Marine Corps Manual, Chapter 1*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 26 February 1997, available from <http://www.usmc.mil/wwwmain/mission.htm>.

⁸ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 5711.01, *Policy on Action Processing*, 12 July 1993, 1-2.

⁹ Joint Staff Personnel Strength, *Joint Staff Organizational Chart*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 15 January 1997, available from <http://www.dtic.mil:80/jcs>.

¹⁰ Map of CINC AORs, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 26 February 1997, available from <http://www.acom.mil/acom/public/do/images/aor.gif>.

¹¹ Special Operations Command Fact Sheet, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 28 January 1997, available from <http://www.dtic.mil/defenseink/factfile/chapter1/socom.html>.

¹² USACOM Mission Fact Sheet, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 26 February 1997, available from <http://www.acom.mil/acom/public/do/what.htm>.

¹³ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 5711.01, 2-3.

¹⁴ Ronald H. Cole, Walter S. Poole, James F. Schnabel, Robert J. Watson, and Willard J. Webb, *The History of the Unified Command Plan, 1946-1993* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, February 1995), 116.

¹⁵ Joint Staff Manual 5100.01, *Organization and Functions of the Joint Staff*, 31 December 1996, K-2.

¹⁶ Ibid., P-4.

¹⁷ Public Law 99-433, Goldwater-Nicholas Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., October 1, 1986, H.R. 3622, Title IV, 1008.

¹⁸ "Joint Pub Hierarchy" and "Joint Doctrine Story," n.p.; on-line, Internet, 18 March 1997, available from <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/docinfo/pstatus/hierchart.htm> and http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/docinfo/doctrine_story.htm.

¹⁹ *Inside the Air Force*, "Folgeman, Reimer Reach Consensus on Counterair, Fire Support Doctrine," January 17, 1997, 5.

²⁰ This reflects day-to-day perception rather than any conscious decision or desire on the part of the Joint Staff to remove themselves from this responsibility. However, the fact still remains that the CINCs and the Services usually bring forward ideas for change.

Notes

Lt Col Tim Malone, Joint Staff (J-7) Joint Doctrine Division; telecon with author, 18 March 1997.

²¹ Gen John J. Sheehan, USMC, USCINCCOM, “Next Steps in Joint Force Integration,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 13 (Autumn 1996): 42.

²² AFSC Publication 1, *The Joint Staff Officer's Guide*, (Washington, DC; U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), 1-23.

²³ Admiral Joseph W. Prueher, USN, “Warfighting CINCs in a New Era,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 13 (Autumn 1996): 51.

²⁴ Gen David C. Jones, USAF (Ret), “Goldwater-Nicholas - The Beginning,” speech to National Defense University Symposium, “The Goldwater-Nicholas DOD Reorganization Act: A Ten Year Retrospective,” Washington, DC, December 3, 1996.

²⁵ Public Law 99-433, 1032.

²⁶ Department of Defense, *Directions for Defense*, 2-3.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Over time, the U.S. military has developed an enviable reputation for excellence in action. Until now, that reputation has been primarily predicated on qualitatively superior Service elements, albeit many times working closely together with other Services. Unfortunately, we must recognize the growing certainty of fewer resources allocated to the U.S. military as well as the growing uncertainty of the threat we face. Regardless of the reason, the American public will not long suffer excuses for failure given our success in raising their expectations. For continued success, the Department of Defense must relentlessly pursue the institutionalization of excellence in military operations. There is great potential for future disappointment if we think brute force coupled with technological gadgetry will be there to carry the day as it has in the past.

We must come to grips with the need to rely on other methods to minimize critical mistakes on the field of battle, whatever shape that field takes. When push comes to shove, Americans are also famous for putting aside petty differences and pulling together as a team. Goldwater Nicholas has set the stage for the right pieces to come together to make it happen. Many attributes of the German General Staff Corps could serve as a template for further improvements while retaining a distinctly American flavor.

The Congress and the Secretary of Defense have instituted a rudimentary joint officer selection process with the JSO system. Now, the objective should be to add rigor to the selection criteria through a broad-based, standardized evaluation mechanism such as a comprehensive written test developed by the Joint Staff with the Chairman's guidance.

Enhancing the breadth and depth of JSO operational training is also an imperative. It appears USACOM is making a good start. The Chairman should elevate the visibility of this critical underpinning for future joint staff officer excellence. The Joint Staff could directly supervise advanced development of the concepts and then retain administrative authority in the name of the Chairman. Perhaps the Armed Forces Staff College could serve as the organizing mechanism, but responsible for a significantly improved curriculum. The Services could help by increasing the study emphasis on military history as a surrogate for practical experience within the joint portion of their intermediate and senior service school curriculums. The Chairman could focus the effort by providing guidance, perhaps in the form of a reading list. This review of military history could also serve as the basis for an educational, analytical model designed to further improve critical thinking skills. Scrupulous analytical objectivity will be essential to help mitigate the inevitable capability shortfalls resulting from a resource constrained environment.

Currently, the development of joint doctrine is ill-served by the ad hoc designation of lead agents. The Joint Staff should religiously guard the Chairman's prerogatives as provided by Goldwater Nicholas in this precedent setting arena. Joint doctrine is that important to the pace and direction of joint force employment. No other organization should be allowed to even unintentionally interfere with his vision—assist yes, interfere no.

Finally, an appropriate cross flow of quality people and processes to and from joint and Service duty would serve to mitigate to a degree the risk of operational mistakes, which is likely to worsen given decreasing resources and lack of a significant threat. As such, the JSO system must promote the placement of quality individuals in Service command assignments as well as joint billets for both joint and Service operational benefit. Furthermore, the Services need JSOs to advance the operational art among the next generation—our young officers in the field. Periodic assignments back to the operating units would help JSOs assist in the early education of junior officers and also maintain a healthy respect for operational realities.

Ultimately, the division of labor between the Joint Staff, the Service staffs, and the CINC staffs will surface as a critical issue as available resources decrease and the pressure increases to reduce staffs even further. The CINCs will need to focus on day-to-day operations in their AOR, the Services will need to focus on their basic training and acquisition responsibilities, and the Joint Staff should focus on what will be key to the coordinated, competent application of force across Services and across CINCS—joint doctrine, joint education and training, and joint expertise. The Chairman will set the framework, and joint specialty officers could serve as the glue which ties the framework together regardless of CINC or Service—but do not yet do so.

This is possible without changes to existing law...and no need to reverse traditional American military deference to proper civilian authority. Unfortunately, the executive branch of the government has yet to put all the pieces together. Congress has done its part. The Chairman has all the authority he needs. Now it is time for the uniformed

military to complete the process. Leadership and continuous improvement are the keys to future success.

Glossary

AOR	Area of Responsibility
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
CSA	Chief of Staff of the Army
CSAF	Chief of Staff of the Air Force
DOD	Department of Defense
JDA	Joint Duty Assignment
JDAL	JDA List
JSO	Joint Specialty Officer
OSD	Office of Secretary of Defense
PME	Professional Military Education
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USN	United States Navy

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